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# READING TEXTS USED DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS IN FIRST AND SECOND YEAR COLLEGE SPANISH<sup>1</sup>

## AMOUNT OF READING

### FIRST YEAR SPANISH

Year	No. of institutions reporting	Av. no. of pages read	Institutions reading less than 100 pages.	100-200	200-300	300-400	400-500	500-600	over 600
1913-14..	19	317	0	5	6	3	3	1	1
1914-15..	22	287	0	7	7	3	3	2	0
1915-16..	32	283	2	7	9	7	4	3	0
1916-17..	40	266	1	13	14	8	1	2	1
1917-18..	40	254	0	15	13	8	1	2	1
Totals..	153	281	3	47	49	29	12	10	3

The amount of reading done in first year Spanish has decreased during every year of the five-year period. The maximum is 317 pages in 1913-1914, and the minimum 254 pages in 1917-1918. The statistics for 1913-1914 and 1914-1915 are based upon a small number of reports and therefore they are not wholly reliable. The figures for the present session may be slightly too low because in certain replies it is stated that the list is incomplete. However, the general tendency is unmistakable. There is a difference of sixty-three pages between the maximum in 1913-1914 and the minimum in 1917-1918. The principal decrease (30 pages) took place in the second year (1914-1915). Since then the downward movement has been steady but slow. The average throughout the whole five years is 282 pages. This amount corresponds pretty well to the figures mentioned as desirable in most of the approved syllabi of first year college Spanish.

<sup>1</sup>This investigation is similar to one dealing with French reading text, and published in the January number of THE MODERN LANGUAGE JOURNAL. The introductory statement prefixed to the article on French texts is equally applicable here.

Regardless of the fact that many institutions submitted statements for two, three, four or five years, if we take each list of books for one year as a separate entity, we find that there are 153 reports dealing with the amount of reading done during one year in first year Spanish. Of these 153 reports 96 are included in the list that ranges from 100 to 300 pages, and 125 in the list from 100 to 400 pages. That is to say, between 81 and 82 per cent. of the reports conform fairly closely to the general average, the tendency being rather under than over it. Of the remaining 28 reports, 22 (a not inconsiderable number) belong in the category that reads from 400 to 600 pages. These last are not so prominent now as they were two years ago. Only three institutions read under 100 pages and only three over 600.

Impressions gained from study of the figures are supported by many statements in letters of comment that accompanied the replies. A desire to limit the amount of reading in favor of oral practice is clearly observable. The inclination toward practice in the spoken language is probably the most important cause of the diminution in the quantity of reading. However, other contributing causes are operative. It was natural that Spanish courses in many colleges and Universities should have been modeled on existing French courses, and that the amount of reading done should have been made to conform to standards in French. Experience seems to show that students find a somewhat greater difficulty in reading Spanish than in reading French. Hence, as time goes on we should not be surprised to notice a decrease on the Spanish side. Another contributing cause toward lessening the amount of reading is the recent rapid expansion in Spanish. Five years ago, it was not uncommon to find that in many places only one year of Spanish was offered, and that only students of some linguistic experience were admitted to such a class. Naturally these students were expected and were able to read a considerable amount. As second year Spanish courses became more general and as the conditions for admission to first year Spanish became less rigid, we notice a readjustment to new circumstances along the lines of less stringent requirements.

It should be remarked that the decrease in volume of reading has taken place in spite of an unquestionable tendency toward simplification in texts used.

## SECOND YEAR SPANISH

Year	No. of institutions reporting	Av. no. of pages read	Institutions reading less than 200 pages	200-300	300-400	400-500	500-600	600-700	700-800	800-900	900-1000	1000-1200	over 1200
1913-14	15	714	0	1	0	1	2	5	1	2	1	1	1
1914-15	13	669	0	0	1	0	4	3	1	2	1	1	0
1915-16	25	608	0	3	2	2	3	7	2	3	2	1	0
1916-17	33	566	1	2	4	4	12	3	2	1	2	1	1
1917-18	38	573	0	3	4	3	10	11	3	1	2	1	0
Totals	124	626	1	9	11	10	31	29	9	9	8	5	2

Decrease from year to year in the number of pages read in second year Spanish is even more striking than in the first year classes, except in the present year.<sup>1</sup> There is a drop from 714 pages in 1913-1914 to 565 pages in 1916-1917. Figures for the present year show a slight increase to 573 pages. The difference between the amount for 1913-1914 and that for the current year is 141 pages. Taking a report for one year as a unit, we find that 124 separate reports are given for second year Spanish. Sixty of these reports come between 500 and 700 pages; that is to say, nearly fifty per cent. of the places furnishing data conform to the general average. Nearly 66 2-3 per cent. are within the limits of 400 and 800 pages. About one-sixth of the reports indicate an amount of reading less than 400 pages, and slightly more than one sixth exceed 800 pages. On the whole there is not so much conformity to the average in second year Spanish as was noticed in the first year work. This is of course only natural, because it is not so necessary in the more advanced class to adhere strictly to any single method of procedure.

Much the same causes that have operated to decrease the amount of reading in the first year are observable also in the second year. The trend toward oral practice and the realization that Spanish literary works contain many difficulties, are just as potent as before. Just as the opening (in certain institutions) of second year classes reduced the necessity for covering a great

<sup>1</sup>This paper was written toward the end of the year 1917-1918.

deal of work in the first year, so the growth of third year work removes a heavy burden from the second year. This fact is mentioned in more than one of the letters of comment that accompanied the lists. It is clear from the tables that during the past two years there has been a very small percentage of institutions that have covered more than 800 pages in the second year.

The general average of 626 pages is perhaps slightly under the amount called for by the majority of approved syllabi, but it does not fall very far short.

INDIVIDUAL TEXTS  
FIRST YEAR SPANISH

TEXT	Institu- tions	Times	1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	Miscella- neous
El Capitán Veneno . . . . .	17	43	10	6	10	9	6	2
Zaragüeta . . . . .	15	31	2	4	6	9	7	3
Bransby: A Spanish Reader . . . . .	11	24	3	5	6	4	2	4
Hills: Spanish Tales for Beginners . . . . .	11	18	4	1	5	4	2	2
Harrison: Elementary Spanish Reader . . . . .	9	17	1	4	7	4	1	0
Mariñela . . . . .	6	16	3	3	4	2	3	1
El pájaro verde . . . . .	10	15	2	1	2	5	3	2
Gil Blas . . . . .	8	14	3	2	5	3	1	0
Roessler & Remy: First Spanish Reader . . . . .	11	14	0	0	1	8	4	1
Novelas cortas . . . . .	9	13	2	2	3	4	0	2
El sé de las niñas . . . . .	7	12	3	2	2	0	2	3
La hermana San Sulpicio . . . . .	6	11	2	3	1	1	1	3
Espinosa: Elementary Spanish Reader . . . . .	10	11	0	0	0	5	6	0
Doña Perfecta . . . . .	6	10	2	3	1	3	1	0
Lo positivo . . . . .	5	10	2	2	2	1	2	1
Cuentos alegres . . . . .	5	9	2	3	1	2	0	1
José . . . . .	5	8	0	1	3	0	3	1

## FIRST YEAR SPANISH

TEXT	Institu- tions	Times	1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	Miscella- neous
Bergé-Soler & Hathaway: Elementary Spanish-American Reader . . . . .	7	7	0	0	0	0	7	0
Cuentos modernos . . . . .	6	7*	1	0	0	5	0	1
De Vitis: Spanish Reader . . . . .	7	7	0	0	0	0	7	0
Lecturas fáciles . . . . .	7	7	0	0	0	4	2	1
Loiseaux: Spanish Reader . . . . .	2	7	1	2	2	2	0	0
La alegría del Capitán Ribot . . . . .	3	7	1	1	2	2	1	0
Victoria y otros cuentos . . . . .	5	7	0	1	1	3	2	0
Fortuna . . . . .	5	6	0	0	1	3	1	1
Hall: Poco a poco . . . . .	4	6*	0	1	1	2	0	2
Fuentes and François: A Trip to Latin America . . . . .	6	6	0	0	0	0	6	0
Partir a tiempo . . . . .	2	6	0	1	2	2	1	0
Tres comedias modernas . . . . .	4	6	0	2	2	1	1	0
España pintoresca . . . . .	5	5	0	0	0	0	5	0
Harrison: Commercial Reader . . . . .	4	5	0	1	1	2	0	1
Hills & Reinhardt: Spanish Short Stories . . . . .	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	0
La coja y el encogido . . . . .	3	5	0	2	0	2	1	0
Totals¹ . . . . .		448	53	63	83	108	101	40

¹These totals include texts used less than five times; see appendix.

## SECOND YEAR SPANISH

TEXT	Institu- tions	Times	1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	Miscella- neous
Don Quijote . . . . .	22	46		6	10	12	9	4
Doña Perfecta . . . . .	17	32	5	4	4	9	9	4
José . . . . .	14	25	5	4	4	3	9	0
La hermana San Sulpicio . . . . .	17	23	1	0	4	12	6	0
Marianela . . . . .	13	20	5	1	4	3	4	3
El Capitán Veneno . . . . .	12	21	1	1	6	5	6	2
¿O locura o santidad? . . . . .	9	20	2	3	6	2	5	2
La barraca . . . . .	11	19	3	3	5	3	3	2
La vida es sueño . . . . .	9	18	2	4	4	3	5	0
Pepita Jiménez . . . . .	11	17	2	1	3	3	6	2
El sí de las niñas . . . . .	10	17	1	2	1	5	6	2
El sombrero de tres picos . . . . .	9	16	2	3	2	6	3	0
Bécquer: Legends, Tales and Poems . . . . .	9	15	2	1	2	3	2	5
Doña Clarines y Mañana de sol . . . . .	9	14	0	0	2	5	7	0
Lo positivo . . . . .	5	13	1	0	4	5	3	0
La alegría del Capitán Ribot . . . . .	9	12	2	0	1	5	2	2
Alarcón: Novelas cortas . . . . .	7	10	0	0	1	5	4	0



## SECOND YEAR SPANISH

TEXT	Institu- tion	Times	1913-14	1914-15	1915-16	1916-17	1917-18	Miscella- neous
Bonilla: Spanish Daily Life	7	9	0	0	1	2	3	3
La moza de cántaro	5	9	0	2	2	3	0	2
Hills and Reinhardt: Spanish Short Stories	6	8	0	0	3	1	4	0
Morley: Spanish Ballads	4	8	1	2	2	2	1	0
El haz de leña	6	7	2	3	2	0	0	0
El trovador	5	7	0	0	1	4	0	2
Gil Blas	6	6	0	0	1	1	4	0
Hills and Morley: Spanish Lyrics	5	6	0	0	2	0	2	2
Pedro Sánchez	5	6	2	2	0	1	1	0
Tres comedias modernas	3	6	1	1	2	0	2	0
El niño de la bola	3	6	1	1	1	2	1	0
Las Novedades	2	6	0	1	1	1	0	3
La familia de Alvarada	5	5	1	0	0	1	3	0
Zaragüeta	4	5	0	1	1	1	2	0
La América del Sud	3	5	0	0	3	1	1	0
Un servilón y un liberalito	3	5	1	1	1	2	0	0
Boletín de la unión Pan-Americana	2	5	0	0	0	0	1	4
Flores de España	2	5	1	1	2	1	0	0
Un drama nuevo	2	5	0	0	0	0	1	4
Totals <sup>1</sup>		565	51	57	107	138	161	51

<sup>1</sup>These totals include texts used less than five times; see appendix.

## FIRST YEAR SPANISH

Disregarding the fact that a book has been read several times in different years, if we take each single use of a text as a unit, we find that the tables for first year Spanish show 448 instances of the employment of some text as reading material.<sup>1</sup> In 1913-1914 there are 53 such instances; in 1914-1915, 63; in 1915-1916, 83; in 1916-1917, 108; in 1917-1918, 101; in the undated or miscellaneous group, 40.

Among single literary texts *El Capitán Veneno* stands alone. Used 43 times out of a total of 448, it accounts for nearly 10 per cent. of that total. It still holds its own fairly well, although its relative popularity has diminished if we consider the question mathematically; from nearly 20 per cent. of the total in 1913-14 it has dropped to about 6 per cent. in 1917-1918. *Zaragüeta* stands next, with a total of 31 times used, and in the last two years it has actually been read more often than *El Capitán Veneno*. *Marianela*, *El pájaro verde*, *Gil Blas*, Alarcón's *Novelas cortas*, *El sí de las niñas*, *La hermana San Sulpicio*, *Doña Perfecta* and *Lo positivo* have all been used ten or more times. It is noticeable, however, that none of the literary texts just mentioned, except *Zaragüeta* and *El pájaro verde* have been used more often in the last two years than they were in the first two. If we consider percentages rather than actual number of times employed, the falling off is even more marked. This tendency leads us to a conclusion that seems to stand out clearly from whatever angle these lists are studied—namely, that literary texts are not used so much now as they were formerly. The insistence upon the commercial importance of Spanish and the undeniable difficulty of Spanish literary style have led to a demand for material of an easy and practical nature. This demand has been answered by the publication very recently of numerous readers and collections dealing with Spanish and Spanish-American business, geography, history, customs, etc.

It should be mentioned that the demand for more practical material is not a universal one. Various persons commend the use of literary material and deplore an extreme trend toward commercialism.

The clearest way to present the facts as to literary texts and utilitarian matter is to translate into figures the general tendency just discussed. To do this we must divide the texts into two class-

<sup>1</sup>For instance, if one book has been used 20 times, another 15 times, and still another 5 times, this means a total of 40 times that a class has used some text.

es, which we may arbitrarily call literary and non-literary texts. No such division can be made scientifically, but for purposes of discussion a working line of cleavage can be established. Thus, under literary works are included all novels, stories, and plays of single authors, and collections of stories or plays by the same or different authors, provided such collections are not elementary readers. Under non-literary texts are grouped books of travel and history, informative documents, periodicals, and, despite obvious objections, elementary readers.

In the accompanying tables there are 448 instances of the use of texts; 273 or 60 per cent. are literary. In 1913-1914 the total number of instances is 53; of these 46 (83 per cent.) are literary. The total for 1914-1915 is 63; 44 (70 per cent.) are literary. The total for 1915-1916 is 83; 62 (75 per cent.) are literary. The total for 1916-1917 is 108; 62 (57 per cent.) are literary. The total for 1917-1918 is 101; 46 (45 per cent.) are literary.

Thus it is clear that there is a drop from 83 per cent. of literary texts in 1913-1914 to 45 per cent. in 1917-1918. The principal reduction, coincident with the publication of many new utilitarian texts, has taken place in the last two years.

The use of *Don Quijote* in first year Spanish is confined to institutions where only one year of Spanish is given and where the students must have considerable training in language work before entering the class. A parallel is offered by the occasional reading of Dante in some universities where only one year of Italian is given.

#### SECOND YEAR SPANISH

The tables for second year Spanish contain 565 instances of the employment of a text. The first two years, with 51 and 57 instances respectively, have comparatively scanty statistics. The last three years give more comprehensive figures, 107, 138, and 161, respectively. The list of undated or miscellaneous cases is 51.

It is impossible not to notice that several texts that were commonly read in first year Spanish are also well represented in the second year. *El Capitán Veneno*, *Marianela*, *Gil Blas*, Alarcón's *Novelas cortas*, *El sí de las niñas*, *La hermana San Sulpicio*, *Doña Perfecta*, *Lo positivo*, *José*, and *La alegría del Capitán Ribot* are all used at least seven times in each of the two classes. It would appear from this circumstance that Spanish courses are not well standardized, and that teachers are not by any means clear at

what point certain books should be introduced into class. Of course different systems and aims of work and different degrees of preparation on the part of students in different institutions make it not seem strange to find the same material occasionally used in a more and in a less advanced course. We should not expect, however, such extensive duplication as is here revealed. In order to explain it we must assume that besides lack of standardization, Spanish has suffered from a scarcity of texts, which is only now beginning to give way to a satisfactory condition.

A close examination of the figures shows that the employment of the same texts in first and second year work is not wholly indiscriminate. Thus, in the second year work *Doña Perfecta* is found six times in the first two years (1913-1914 and 1914-1915) and 18 times in the last two; *José*, nine times in the first two and 12 times in the last two; *La hermana San Sulpicio*, once in the first two and 18 times in the last two; *Marianela* six and seven times, respectively; *El Capitán Veneno*, 2 and 11; *El sí de las niñas* 3 and 11; *Lo positivo*, 1 and 8; *La alegría del Capitán Ribot*, 2 and 7; *Novelas Cortas*, 0 and 9; *Gil Blas*, 0 and 5. All of these books have increased in popularity in second year Spanish and all except *Marianela* and *José* have increased very much. Most of them show a larger percentage of times used during the last two years than during the first two, despite the greater number of texts at present available. If we turn to first year Spanish and look at the figures for the same texts we find that *Doña Perfecta* appears five times in the first two years and four times in the last two. The figures for *José* are 1 and 3; *La hermana San Sulpicio*, 5 and 2; *Marianela*, 6 and 5; *El Capitán Veneno*, 16 and 15; *El sí de las niñas*, 5 and 2; *Lo positivo*, 4 and 3; *La alegría del Capitán Ribot*, 2 and 3; *Novelas cortas*, 4 and 4; *Gil Blas*, 5 and 4. Except in the case of *José* and *La alegría del Capitán Ribot*, for which the first year figures are very scanty, these texts have all either remained stationary or have decreased in actual number of times used. In percentage of times used they have shown a notable decrease.

Thus we find that a certain group of texts is being used more and more in second year Spanish, and less and less in the first year. The inference is that reading material in Spanish is rapidly being adjusted to new conditions. Books formerly regarded as appropriate for the most elementary classes are now being assigned to the more advanced classes. This tendency is a natural con-

comitant of the spread of elementary readers and of utilitarian material in the first year work.

A short study of the second year statistics shows that collections of practical material are quite prominent in second year work, and that they are particularly common during the current nine months.<sup>1</sup> The movement has not yet gone far enough to admit of convincing demonstration by percentages. The reading material in second year Spanish is still primarily literary.

Among individual texts, selections from *Don Quijote* occupy the first place in second year work. This corresponds to a natural demand on the part of students. The tables show that *Don Quijote* has been read 23 times in the last two years, whereas it was used 11 times in 1913-1914 and 1914-1915. It is true that the current session shows a slight decrease as compared with 1916-1917, but not enough to be in itself significant. Various remarks in letters of comment indicate the possibility that *Don Quijote* and other works of the Golden Age will soon be used more prominently in third and fourth year classes. Works of the Golden Age represented in these statistics are *Don Quijote*, *La vida es sueño*, *La moza de cántaro*, *La verdad sospechosa*, *Las paredes oyen*, *El cautivo*, *Don Gil de las calzas verdes*, *El alcalde de Zalamea* and *Mocedades del Cid*. If the figures for all of these books are added, the result shows that they were used 23 times in 1913-1914 and 1914-1915, and 36 times in 1916-1917 and 1917-1918. If we exclude *Don Quijote* from the computation, works of the Golden Age were employed 12 times in 1913-1914 and 15 times in 1917-1918. Although the percentage of use of these books is smaller than it was five years ago, the figures are not in themselves sufficiently convincing to lend much weight to the belief that classical productions are now less commonly used than formerly in second year Spanish.

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#### APPENDIX

##### FIRST YEAR SPANISH

The following texts were used four times each:

Béquer: Legends, Tales and  
Poems,  
Carter & Malloy: Cuentos caste-  
llanos,  
Don Quijote,  
Flores de España,

Luquiens: Elementary Spanish-  
American Reader,  
Matzke: Spanish Reader,  
Nelson: The Spanish-American  
Reader,  
Pepita Jiménez

<sup>1</sup>1917-1918.

The following were used three times:

Bonilla: Spanish Daily Life,  
Doña Clarines y Mañana de sol,  
El sombrero de tres picos,  
El poder de la impotencia,

Harrison: Intermediate Spanish  
Reader,  
Ramsey: Elementary Spanish  
Reader.

The following were used twice:

Vida de Vasco Nuñez de Balboa,  
La mariposa blanca,  
Morse: Spanish-American Life,

Supple: Spanish Reader of South  
American History,  
Revista Universal,  
Turrell: Spanish Reader.

The following were used once:

Bacon: A Visit to South America,  
Boletín de la unión Pan-Americana,  
El cautivo,  
El trovador,  
Giese: Spanish Reader,  
Henry: Easy Spanish Plays,

La conjuración de Venecia,  
La barraca,  
Panamá y el canal,  
Schevill: A First Reader in Span-  
ish,  
Viajando por Sud-América.

## SECOND YEAR SPANISH

The following texts were used four times each:

La coja y el encogido,  
María,  
¿Quién es ella?

La conjuración de Venecia,  
El comendador Mendoza,  
Partir a tiempo.

The following were used three times:

España pintoresca,  
Guzmán el bueno,  
Hills: Spanish Tales for Beginners,  
Selections from Mesonero Romanos,  
El pájaro verde,  
Supple: Spanish Reader of South  
American History,

Cuentos alegres,  
Fortuna,  
Nelson: The Spanish-American  
Reader,  
Pascual López,  
Bardos cubanos,  
La verdad sospechosa.

The following were used twice:

Consuelo,  
Electra,  
Luquiens: Elementary Spanish  
American Reader,  
Morse: Spanish American Life,  
La navidad en las montañas,  
Las paredes oyen,  
Teatro de ensueño,

Baltasar,  
El cautivo,  
Don Gil de las calzas verdes,  
La Hacienda,  
La mariposa blanca,  
Marta y María,  
Revista Universal,  
Vida de Vasco Núñez de Balboa.

The following were used once:

El alcalde de Zalamea,  
La América e industria americana,  
El castellano actual,  
Cuentos castellanos,  
Cuentos modernos,  
De Vitis: Spanish Reader,  
Harrison: Intermediate Spanish  
Reader,  
El Ingeniero,  
Don Juan Tenorio,

Wilkins and Luria: Lecturas  
fáciles,  
Lecturas modernas,  
Matzke: Spanish Reader,  
Mocedades del Cid,  
Novelas ejemplares,  
Old Spanish Readings,  
Panamá y el canal,  
Ramsey: Elementary Spanish  
Reader  
Trafalgar.